

Meeting called to order in the BOS Meeting Room at the Milford Town Hall at 7:00

Present:

Full members: Audrey Fraizer, Chair; Andy Hughes, Becky Lorette, Janet Urquhart, Alternate members: Chris Costantino, Andy Seale. Diane Morin, Kim Rimalover and HubSeward excused

Guests: Dan Reed, New England Forestry Consultants. Abutters to Tucker Brook Town Forest: Mark Bokhan, Bill Burdett, Amy Kirschner, Joseph Micozzi, Therese Muller, Brenda Santiago, Michael Sebas, Robert Wisnewski

Minutes: August 2012 meeting minutes were unanimously accepted as presented on a motion by Becky, seconded by Andy S.

Discussion Items

1. Healthy Community Event at the Boys and Girls Club – Audrey, Becky and Chris participated in the event on behalf of the Commission. At least a dozen people stopped by the table and took maps and bookmarks
2. Trails and Outdoors Expo 2013 – Audrey will prepare a cover letter to accompany packets to be sent to vendors and sponsors
3. Tucker Brook Town Forest Timber Harvest
 - a. Audrey opened up the discussion about the timber harvest by referencing our role as stewards of the natural resources in town. We are not contracting this harvest so that we can put money in the town forest fund. The Commission wants this forest to be healthy, hosting a vibrant and diversified wildlife and plant population.
 - b. As a result of question and discussion, several conditions were determined for Dan Reed to incorporate into the timber harvest plan that he will develop.
 - i. Stay away from the vernal pools – respect the 100' buffer articulated by the NH DES
 - ii. Do not mark the “wolf” Beech tree in the eastern (Millimet) section of the timber harvest
 - iii. Need to consider the location of future trails so that they won't interfere with skid trails created in this or future harvests
 - iv. Keep out of intermittent streams
 - v. No landing at Boulder Drive
 - vi. Dan will mark trees for consideration and also the skid trails so that interested parties have a better concept of the scope of the harvest.
 - vii. Preserve the trails as much as possible – clear brush from the trails after the harvest is complete
 - viii. Consider the forest in the context of the landscape. There are open spaces around Tucker Brook in the Wheeler Christmas Tree farm to the east and in the Savage Farm to the west
 - ix. General thinning cut to:
 1. Remove lower value trees that are competing for resources with healthier trees
 2. Remove mature trees
 3. Thin overcrowded stands; particularly the hemlock stands which will allow for regeneration of less shade tolerant trees species and encourage more diversified wildlife
 4. Create openings – ideally 5 acres in size to encourage neotropical birds. This habitat is disappearing from our local landscape. This will also help to manage the mountain laurel population <http://www.nhdfi.org/about-forests-and-lands/bureaus/natural-heritage-bureau/photo-index/appalachian-oak-mountain-laurel-forest.aspx> and [http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/kallat/all.html#BOTANICAL AND ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS](http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/kallat/all.html#BOTANICAL_AND ECOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS)
- x. Timeline:
 1. Dan Reed will create a work order
 2. With the acceptance of the Commission, he will mark the trees
 3. A minimum of 2 public walks will be scheduled to allow the public to understand and comment on the harvest

4. Dan Reed will put the sale out to bid
5. Logger/Buyer will be selected by the Commission
6. Agreement with Dave Wheeler for access will be finalized
7. Meet with Selectmen
8. Schedule a mid harvest public walk if practicable
- xi. Summary of logging techniques:
 1. Chipper needs bigger access, results in cleaner postharvest appearance, gives better wildlife results
 2. Cut to length can make sharp turns so less residual damage to the remaining forest
- xii. Comments/Questions from the abutters:
 1. How necessary is this cut? Why are we accelerating the natural process? There are trees already falling, so transition is already occurring. Beech are dying back creating openings for regeneration. Dan Reed's response to the beech die-back is that that perpetuates the beech/hemlock complex.
 2. Keep the hiking trails away from the skid trails. Dan will mark most of the skid trails for the Commission evaluation and that skid trails will cross perpendicularly to the trails
 3. Mike Sebas recommended that just one skid trail be run through the Goodridge Lot between the two trails. He had presented a letter and a plan to the Commission in July. The letter and plan were sent to Dan Reed for comment and consideration
 4. Can the Commission stay out of the Goodridge Lot since it is so narrow and the egress to the landing will be through a very narrow section of the town forest with an intermittent stream and a trail further constraining the available area for a skid trail
 5. Can the trails be cleared from residual brush with the funds generated from the timber harvest
 6. Can the wildlife corridors be maintained? Dan Reed's response was that the animals will go where they want to go – but they want to go to food and will get there the easiest and most direct way.
4. Upcoming events – Members volunteered for the many upcoming events. Chris will send out a spreadsheet with time slots for members to fill out.
5. Mile Slip Management Plan
 - a. Steve Erdody is working to formalize the north loop. He will blaze the trail and also create a trail that connects directly to the Mitchell Brook trail.
 - b. The Commission would like to see a continued pattern of creating large openings to continue the patchwork appearance that is already in place.
6. Audrey would like to direct Commission effort into creating easements on the town forests
7. Souhegan River Trail East- bridge over the overflow gully from the Souhegan River.
 - a. Jon Thunberg presented a plan for a bridge that would span this gully
 - b. Need to check that there will be at least one handrail on the bridge
 - c. Include a toe rail along both sides of the bridge
 - d. On a motion by Janet, seconded by AndyS, the Commission unanimously approved the expenditure of \$600 to buy materials so that Jon T can build the bridge.
8. Souhegan River Trail West
 - a. Josh Clemens is working on a survey of the knotweed populations along the Souhegan River
 - b. Still no word from the NH F&G about Jon T's proposed plan to remove the knotweed along the trail
9. The members regretfully accepted Diane Morin's resignation from the Commission. Her energy and expertise will be greatly missed.
10. Becky put cleats on the bridge at the southern end of the Johnson Easement on the Rail Trail

Meeting adjourned at 9:30